

November 30, 2005

NEWS For Immediate Release NEWS

Winter Moose Season on Yukon Drainage portion of Unit 18 Announced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are announcing a winter season for residents to harvest antlered bull moose in a portion of Unit 18. Federal public lands in Unit 18 are closed to the taking of moose except by rural Alaska residents of Unit 18, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, and Chuathbaluk. The season will be open from December 20, 2005 through January 10, 2006 within Unit 18 westerly of a line from the mouth of the Ishkowi River to the closest point of Dall Lake, then to the easternmost point of Takslesluk Lake, then along the Kuskokwim River drainage boundary to the Unit 18 border. Note that this season opening **does not** include that portion of Unit 18 south and east of, and including, the Kuskokwim River drainage. The bag limit is one antlered bull.

Additionally, the bag limit in the area below Mt. Village (which is defined as the area north and west of a line from Cape Romanzof to Kusilvak Mt. to Mt. Village and excluding all Yukon River drainages upriver from Mt. Village) is one antlered bull or one calf. This liberal bag limit is justified by the 27.5% growth rate and the high calf:adult ratio of 63.9 calves:100 adults. During a recent survey, we estimated that the population included over 500 calves and in order for this population to remain within the carrying capacity of the habitat, we encourage hunters to take calves from this area below Mt. Village.

Previous 10-day openings were made by announcement, and this 22-day season is intended to replace that shorter season. We point out that this opening includes the season preferred by Yukon village residents to allow an opportunity to take moose prior to Slavic. It also satisfies concerns about a 10-day season not providing adequate opportunity during years when poor weather prevented hunters from hunting.

The closing date for this season was chosen after a recent survey of over 300 moose revealed that none of them carried antlers by January 12. Because so few moose carry antlers after January 10, there is no opportunity to extend this season under any circumstance, including poor weather.

The Kuskokwim River drainage and southeastern portions of Unit 18 remain closed as part of the agreed upon strategy to establish a moose population in the Kuskokwim portion of Unit 18. This opening, which more than doubles the length of the winter season along the Yukon and allows calves to be taken below Mt. Village, should serve as encouragement to those Kuskokwim village residents anticipating similar results in their area.

Hunters are reminded that a current State of Alaska hunting license and a moose harvest ticket are required. An unused 2005 moose harvest ticket issued for the fall season is still valid for this winter season. However, all hunters must obtain a valid 2006 hunting license beginning January 1. Only one antlered bull moose (or one calf if taken below Mt. Village) may be taken under the combined state and federal winter seasons. Hunters who harvested a moose anytime after July 1 may not harvest an additional moose during this season.

For Additional Information, Contact:

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US Fish & Wildlife Service, Bethel
800-621-5804
907-543-3151

or

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, Bethel
907-543-2979
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Unit 18 winter moose season December 20 – January 10. Map defines area where different bag limits apply.

